

Your Next Big Idea Might Fail – Here's How to Make Sure it Doesn't

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Today's Learning Outcomes

1) Understand and apply the Real-Win-Worth framework
2) Learn how to assess risk using Core-Adjacency analysis
3) Use a Core-Adjacency scoring tool to evaluate opportunities
4) Bring structured analysis to innovation decisions

Why Do We Need Frameworks?

PM’s often jump into execution too fast

Ideas get shot down without structured justification

PM’s don’t always control strategy – but they can still influence it



Framework #1: Real-Win-Worth



https://hbr.org/2007/12/is-it-real-can-we-win-is-it-worth-doing-managing-risk-and-reward-in-an-innovation-portfolio

Breaking Down Real-Win-Worth (RWW)



What Research Helps Answer RWW?

Is the Opportunity Real?

- *Customer interviews*
- *Surveys and user testing*
- *Market sizing and segmentation*
- *Usage or behavioral data*

Can We Win?

- *Competitive analysis*
- *Capability mapping*
- *Internal team and resource assessment*
- *Prior success/failure patterns*

Is the Opportunity Worth It?

- *TAM/SAM market models*
- *Revenue projections*
- *Cost estimation*
- *Strategic alignment scoring*

Example Research Plan

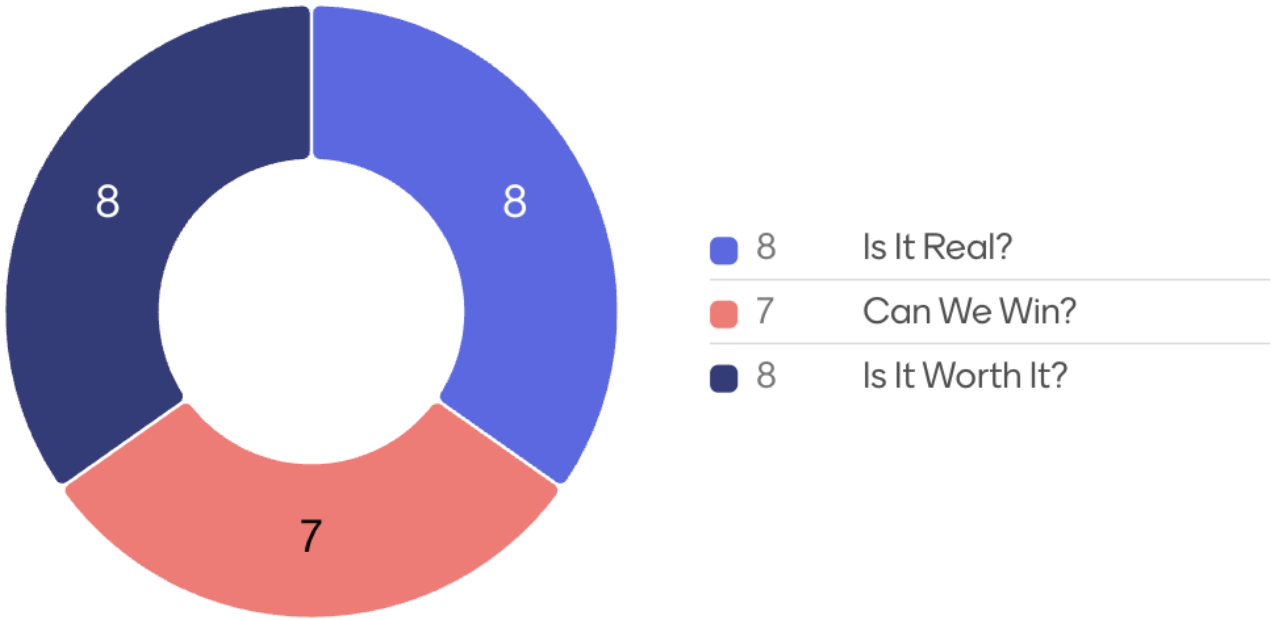
Question	Sub Questions	Check for data internally	Secondary research	Analysis & Modeling	Customer survey	Customer interviews	Employee interviews	Partner interviews	Competitive analysis
Is it Real	How many existing customers would be interested in our data?	x		x	x				
Is it Real	What percentage of total CPG product sales flow through wholesale distributors vs. direct-to-retail?		x	x	x				
Is it Real	Would suppliers value visibility equally as much as retailer POS data, or is it a secondary priority?				x	x	x		
Is it Real	Have customers specifically requested this capability before, or is it just a hypothesis that they need it?	x			x				
Is it Real	For which industries would data be most valuable?		x						
Is it Real	How many distributors exist in the industries we serve today?	x	x						
Is it Real	How fragmented is the market? Are there a few large players that dominate, or thousands of small ones?	x	x				x		
Is it Real	What is the estimated serviceable addressable market (SAM) for this product?	x		x					
Is it Real	Would expanding to new genres of data provide access to entirely new industries or verticals?	x		x					
Is it Real	Does a formal market exist today for distributor data aggregation, normalization, and visualization?		x			x	x	x	x
Is it Real	How is this data positioned within the distributor - supplier relationship? How reliable is a data share to continue?						x	x	
Can we Win?	Are there any existing competitors already providing sales insights to suppliers?				x		x		x
Can we Win?	Would our ability to provide a single, unified view of data be a unique selling point?					x			
Can we Win?	Would distributors be more likely to share data with us than with competitors?							x	
Can we Win?	Would sales reps be able to effectively position the new solution to existing customers, or would additional training be required?								
Can we Win?	What percentage of our existing customers would be immediate targets for this expansion?	x	x	x	x	x			
Can we Win?	Would the sales motion involve simple upselling, or would it require a different approach (e.g., account expansion, new stakeholders)?								
Is it Worth It?	How much additional revenue could this expansion generate within the first 12-24 months?	x		x					
Is it Worth It?	What percentage of existing customers are likely to adopt distributor data, and how much more would they pay?	x		x	x	x			
Is it Worth It?	Could distributor data attract net-new customers who previously found only retailer data insufficient?				x	x	x		
Is it Worth It?	How does distributor data pricing compare to retailer data pricing? Should it be the same, lower, or higher?				x	x	x		x
Is it Worth It?	What is the estimated cost of the necessary product modifications and feature additions?			x					
Is it Worth It?	Would expanding into new data sets require additional sales, customer success, or data operations headcount?			x					
Is it Worth It?	Does this expansion align with the company's long-term strategic direction, or is it just a short-term revenue play?						x		
Is it Worth It?	Would adding distributor data strengthen the overall value proposition of the company's platform?				x	x			
Is it Worth It?	Could this expansion position the company to enter additional data-driven opportunities?								
Is it Worth It?	If the expansion fails, what is the downside risk, and can it be mitigated?						x		
Is it Worth It?	What are the primary product gaps and how feasible would those be to deliver?						x		

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Mentimeter

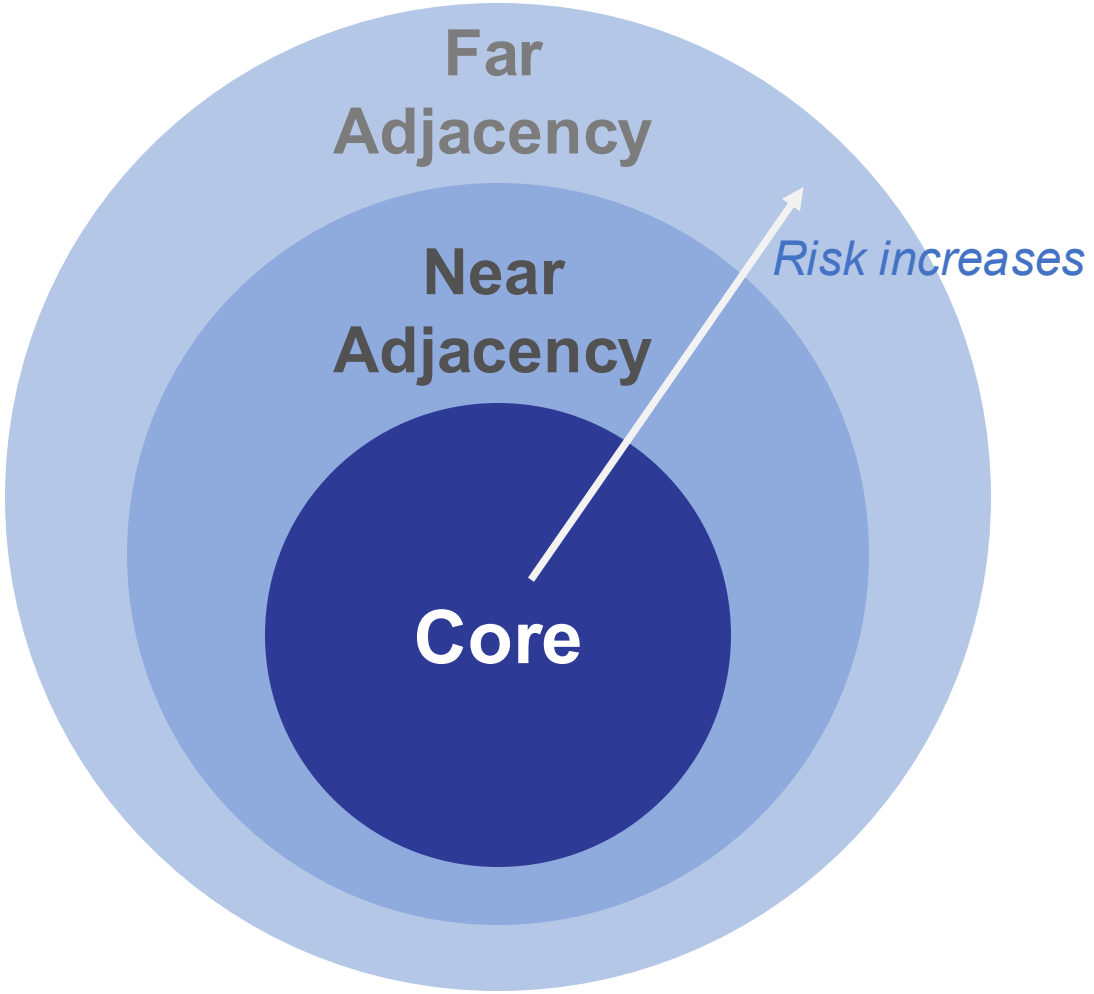
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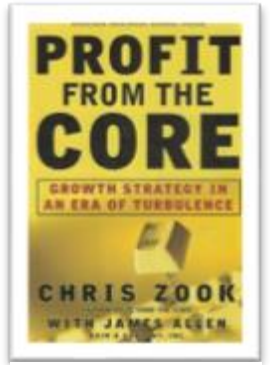
Which is the Hardest Question to Answer?



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Framework #2: Core-Adjacency

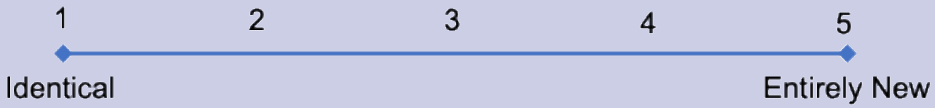




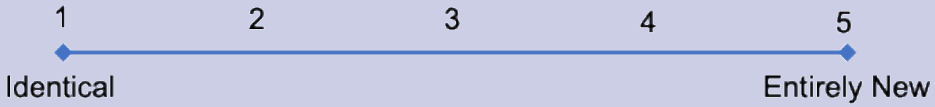
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Scoring Adjacency Risk

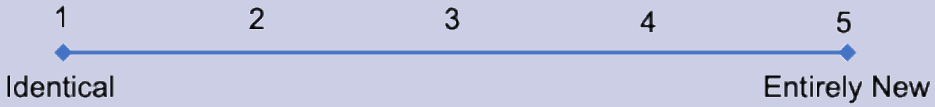
Customer Segment



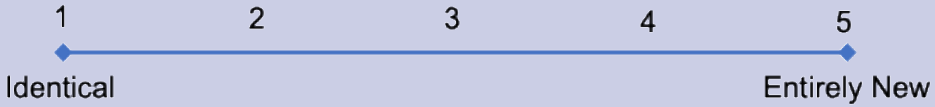
Product Offering



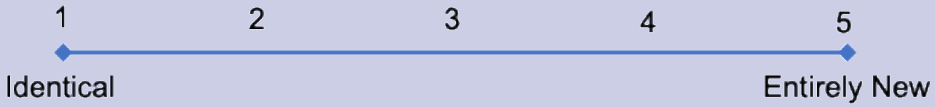
Sales Motion



Technology Stack



Operations



Total Score

5-10 … Core move; low risk
11-17 … Near-adjacency; medium risk
18-25 … Far-adjacency; high risk

Interactive Exercise: Scoring an Opportunity

Scenario

Imagine you're the product manager for a SaaS solution that provides analytics and performance management data to large healthcare networks—organizations with multiple hospitals, 100's or 1000's of users, and complex IT requirements. Your company has built a reputation for deep functionality, robust security, and high-touch enterprise support.

Now, someone on the team proposes a new idea: what if you took a stripped-down version of this product, and sold it to small, independent community hospitals? You know these hospitals have smaller budgets, less IT staff, and different purchasing behaviors, but your product could shine light on their performance issues.

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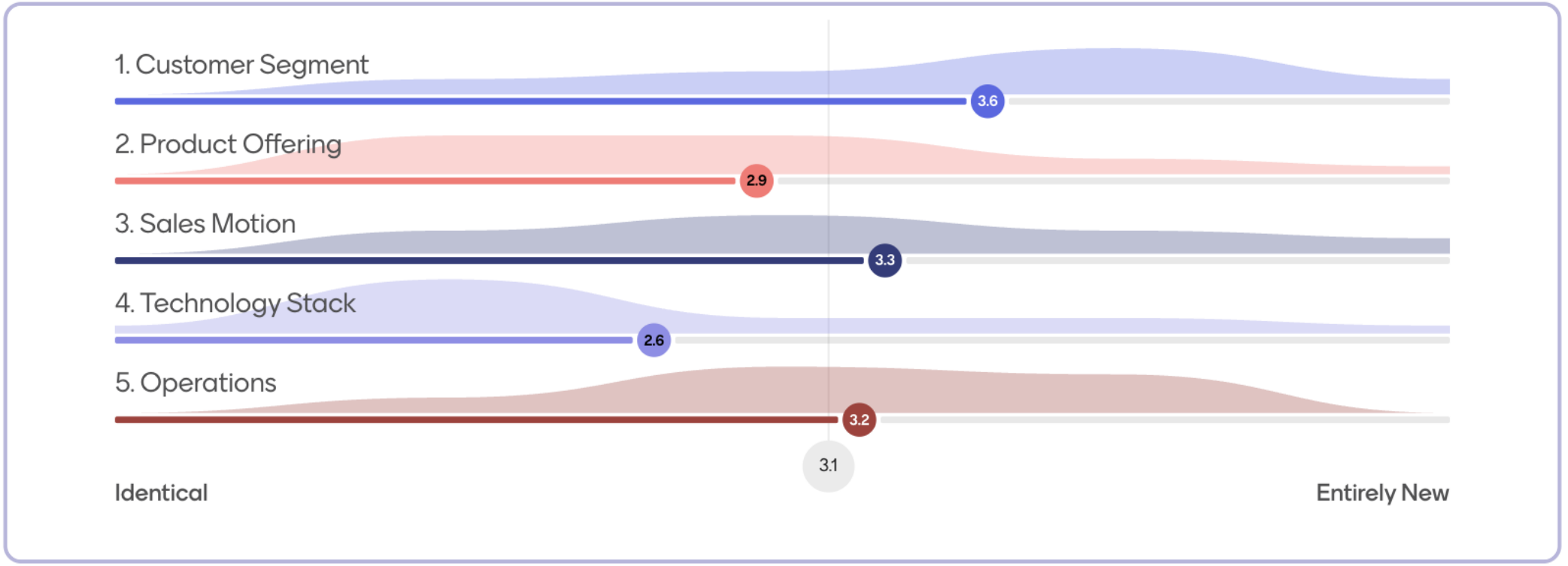
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Mentimeter

Use the sliders to indicate an adjaceny score for each of the five dimensions

How Adjacent is the Opportunity on Each Dimension?



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Scoring Tool for Everyone to Try

https://bit.ly/core-adjacency-scoring

Core-Adjacency Scoring Tool

Select a score for each of the five dimensions

Total Score = 14

Near-Adjacent - Medium risk, requires careful planning

Customer Segment Score: 2

→ Is the target customer segment the same as today or a completely new type?

1 - Identical ... exact same segment we serve today

2 - Overlapping ...same industry or use case, minor differences

3 - Related ... Different segment, but familiar (e.g., similar pain points)

4 - Distant ... unfamiliar segment with different needs or dynamics

5 - Entirely New ... totally different customer type or market

Product Offering Score: 4

→ Does this use the current product or require a significantly new solution?

1 - No Change ... uses current product as-is

2 - Minor Tweaks ... cosmetic or light feature changes

3 - Moderate Changes ... new configuration, version, or packaging

4 - Major Changes ... major feature work or re-architecture

5 - New Product ... entirely new product or solution

Sales Motion Score: 3

→ Can we sell this through our current go-to-market channels, or does it require a different approach?

1 - Same Process ... same sales team, same GTM model

2 - Minor Adjustments ... slight shift in messaging or pitch

3 - Modified Motion ... requires new playbooks or enablement

4 - Different Channel ... different sales channel (e.g., from direct to partner)

5 - New Motion Entirely ... requires building a new GTM capability from scratch

Technology Stack Score: 3

→ Will it use our existing platform and tech, or require new infrastructure?

For Software Products

1 - Fully Reusable ... delivered on current codebase and infrastructure

2 - Minor Adaptation ... minor updates to APIs or database; no new services

3 - Moderate Expansion ... new module or integration, but built with known stack

4 - Major Rework ... migration to new backend system or new app architecture

5 - Entirely New ... brand-new stack, cloud platform, or language

For Manufactured Products

1 - Fully Reusable ... manufactured with existing equipment, tooling, and vendors

2 - Minor Adaptation ... new material or small fixture change; no tooling overhaul

3 - Moderate Expansion ... new sub-assembly or step in the process; same line used

4 - Major Rework ... new assembly line configuration or capital equipment

5 - Entirely New ... new factory, new suppliers, or full redesign of production

Operations Score: 2

→ Can we support this with current processes (e.g., onboarding, billing, support), or would it require new operational capabilities?

1 - Fully Aligned ... delivered using existing processes and teams

2 - Light Adaptation ... slight changes in onborading, support, or billing

3 - Moderate Change ... New SOPs, SLAs, or staffing adjustments

4 - Heavy Lift ... Requires new teams or system integrations

5 - Built from Scratch ... new operational infrastructure and processes required

Applying the Frameworks Together

		Duration (Weeks)
Conduct Initial Core-Adjacency Scoring	- *How big of a risk is this opportunity?* - *Is it worth exploring more?*	**1-2**
Develop Real-Win-Worth Questions	- *Brainstorm* - *Use LLM*	**1**
Build Research Plan	- *Determine where biggest research bang-for-the-buck will be*	**1**
Answer "Is it Real?" **Answer "Can we Win"** **Answer "Is it Worth It?"**	- *Primary and secondary research* - *Revenue and cost estimates*	**4-8+**
Revisit Core-Adjacency Scoring	- *Has research helped de-risk the opportunity?*	**1**



Wrap-Up: What to Remember and Do Next

Use Real-Win-Worth to structure evaluation

Use Core-Adjacency to understand risk and stretch

Research matters—talk to customers, test assumptions

Be the person who brings clarity, not just ideas

Thank You

Q&A



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